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The Indigenization Policy of Propaganda Fide: Its Effectiveness and Limitations in China (1622–1742)

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Abstract: The papal Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, founded in 1622, marks a milestone in the history of Christianity by promoting a new way of organizing “apostolic missionaries”, which represented a major shift from colonial missions to purely ecclesiastical missions. The emphasis on the indigenization of clergy was a central element in its vision right from the founding documents. Propaganda Fide, bypassing the old patronage system, sought to extend the indigenization policy worldwide, though it faced difficulties and obstacles from religious orders and secular powers. This article introduces the history of the development of Propaganda Fide’s indigenization policy and analyzes the early attempts to apply the policy in China, evaluating both its effectiveness and limitations across the first 120 years.

Keywords: propaganda fide; China; catholicism; indigenization; missionary; Chinese rites controversy

1. Introduction

The papal Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, often known as Propaganda Fide and today referred to as the Dicastery for Evangelization), based in Rome, had the task of promoting, coordinating, and directing the missionary activities of the Catholic Church around the world (*Ad Gentes*, No. 29).¹ Pope Gregory XV’s decision on 6 January 1622 to found Propaganda Fide heralded the ecclesiastical orientations that were characteristic of the modern era. With the bull *Inscrutabili divinae providentiae arcano*, the Pope established clear outlines for the new Congregation’s rights and duties that would guarantee its vitality, an adequate juridical position, and an unmistakable identity in relation to the other congregations of the Roman Curia and the various missionary organizations, which were mostly made up of religious orders and institutes. The spiritual rights conferred in the same bull promised full and unlimited power in the vast field of the church’s missionary activities (Zhang 2022a, p. 24).

Propaganda Fide opened up a new way of organizing “apostolic missionaries” around the world, especially in East Asia, where the Chinese Rites Controversy had been brewing for decades (Rouleau 1967, pp. 610–17; Minamiki 1985, pp. 183–203). The central debates of the Controversy included which of the Chinese names for God were appropriate, as well as whether the rituals used to honor ancestors and Confucius could be compatible with the Catholic faith (Mungello 1994, p. 3; Criveller 2012, p. 14; Zhang 2022c, p. 321). This was followed by other disputes on the translation of the Roman missal, breviary, and ritual (Standaert and Tiedemann 2001, p. 627). Notably, the Chinese Roman missal of 1670 was the first Tridentine liturgical book to be translated from Latin into a foreign language, although it was never authorized for use. Those who were opposed to the Chinese liturgy feared, in general, the possibility of a schism (Seah 2017, p. 100). As one of the Chinese liturgy’s fiercest opponents, Christian Lupus (1612–1681) argued that “in Christian communities that are very far from Rome, one must carefully avoid anything that might give rise to schism” (Bontinck 1962, p. 82; Seah 2017, p. 101).

In fact, Propaganda Fide, embodying the papacy’s ambition to be independent, sought to prioritize the training of indigenous clergy, the adaptation to local cultures, and the by-



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passing of the old patronage system of the Portuguese and Spanish Crowns so as to remain above colonial politics (Menegon 2018, p. 32). In 1644, the Congregation established a Particular Congregation on questions of China and the East Indies (Congregationis Particularis super rebus Sinarum et Indiarum Orientalium). In the early years, Propaganda Fide was guided by Secretary Monsignor Francesco Ingoli (1622–1649), a competent and farsighted man appointed by Pope Gregory XV. He promoted the indigenization of the Catholic Church and collected all of the documents concerning the activity of the missionaries and the Congregation: reports, letters, copies of letters, pleas from missionaries, minutes of meetings, registers, instructions, circulars, and decrees. These materials provide us with knowledge of the conditions, difficulties, anxieties, and needs of the missions, which may also serve to develop a missionary policy from a unitary and centralized perspective (Metzler 1988, p. 15).

From its foundation in 1622, Propaganda Fide was responsible for overseeing the expansion of Catholicism across the globe. However, a large proportion of the academic work published in the last fifty years dealing with this expansion focuses almost exclusively on the various regions where missionary activity was taking place, with little if any reference to the contribution of Propaganda Fide to the global evolution of the Church (Prudhomme 2023, p. 29). When writing about the history of Catholic globalization, it is always worth including the vision from Rome, how Propaganda Fide functioned, and the policies it elaborated, without which the picture remains incomplete (Pizzorusso 2018, p. 11). Among the specialists in the field of Catholic missions to China, most scholars have based their research primarily, if not exclusively, on the archives of religious orders,² while other sources such as those from Roman Curia (in this case, Propaganda Fide), though interesting and valuable, have remained relatively unknown and underused (Li 2019, p. 300).

It is worth noting that in Propaganda Fide's indigenization policy, they sought to promote the ordination of indigenous priests and create a diocesan administrative structure in the mission territories. Such a diocesan structure would ensure the greater expansion of the faith, the implantation of *ecclesiae*, the consolidation of the church's presence in the territory of the mission, and the beginning of the gradual, albeit slow and controversial, process of transition from a missionary situation to that of a church which is "formed" (Pizzorusso 2017, p. 435). The missionary bishop could, in fact, enjoy broader spiritual faculties that would facilitate the introduction of Tridentine orthodoxy and, in particular, the practice of the sacraments. Making bishops the central figures of missionary development reflected the model used by the early church, developed in the first centuries of evangelization, in which the bishop was the true apostle (Pizzorusso 2017, p. 436).

This article will focus specifically on the indigenization policy of Propaganda Fide and, following a presentation of its origin, specific content, and several examples, will evaluate its effects, successes, and limitations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and suggest that the debates in the Roman Curia surrounding the question of the indigenization of clergy were a central issue, far too often understudied if not completely ignored by scholars.³ Although the process was slow and controversial, the major shift in the attitudes of the Catholic Church at this time towards other peoples and cultures was extremely significant. It paved the road towards the future, especially during the 20th century and the Second Vatican Council, where the members once again seriously debated the importance of indigenous clergy.

2. Towards the Policy of Indigenization

What immediately catches the eye when studying the history of Propaganda Fide is the transformation of the attitudes towards the indigenous cultures and peoples it sought to promulgate across the globe in Catholic missionary activity. With particular insistence, the new Congregation began by addressing the Apostolic Nuncios and the General Superiors of religious orders, asking them to provide precise information about the missionary situation, as well as the problems, difficulties, and needs of each territory. At the same time, it made suggestions as to how to deal with these missions in the most effective way.⁴

The Cardinals of the Congregation, initially numbering thirteen,⁵ were interested in everything: the conditions of the local churches, the political situations, economic and social conditions, commercial relations, geography and climate, traditions and customs, languages and alphabets, education and literature, and in particular, the indigenous religions in all of the mission territories (Metzler 1971, pp. 146–96).

The information contained in the responses became fundamental sources that allowed the young Congregation to examine and analyze the situation around the world. The first report that reached Propaganda Fide was from the Maronite Vittorio Accorrense, Professor of Arabic and Chaldean languages at the Sapienza University of Rome, interpreter of the Holy Office, and the Master of the Apostolic Palace. Monsignor Francesco Ingoli, the first Secretary of the Congregation (1622–1649), knew him personally and asked him for a report on the situation in the Middle East. By 20 January 1622, Accorrense had completed this task. He gave the Congregation a summary overview of the people living in the East and their religions. Consequently, he recommended three methods to bring Eastern Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans [sic] to the Catholic Church: “crusades, distribution of books and missionary activity”. He also set out his views on the qualities of preachers and their working methods, avoiding the sending of foreign missionaries as much as possible. This last point particularly attracted Ingoli’s attention.⁶

In his report, Accorrense suggested that all missionaries should renounce personal interests and ecclesiastical dignity, that they should be virtuous and respect indigenous people, and that it might be better if the missionaries were directly from the country where they lived and, therefore, be familiar with, and adapt to, the local traditions and customs. Moreover, he asserted that missionaries should accept humiliation willingly and that the basis of their preaching must always be the Holy Scripture. The Congregation, he wrote, had the duty “to ensure the proper maintenance of these missionaries; to bring in sufficient numbers; to reward deserving missionaries for their efforts, in order to be able to attract others; to take great care in the training of missionaries, especially for the study of local languages and dialectical theology; to print and distribute books written in all languages and, to this end, establish a printing press, where mission reports will also be printed” (APF, CP vol. 1, ff. 297r–298r). Ingoli drew from Accorrense’s report numerous valuable suggestions, which were timely in developing his program.⁷

Among the Superior General, it was that of the Jesuits, Muzio Vitelleschi (1615–1645), who first sent his report, which covered the main difficulties and obstacles encountered in the Portuguese colonial empire. He presented the situation of missions, especially in the East where “the fathers are working successfully in the kingdom of Mogor; in Salsete Island, near Bassein; in Goa; in the kingdom of Idalcan; among the Christians of St. Thomas, in Cochin; in Madura; in Travancore and on the island of Mannar (in Ceylon); on the Coromandel Coast and in Bengal. From Malacca, the fathers evangelized the Moluccas. In spite of persecution in Japan, thirty Jesuits remained there; they secretly take care of Christians. Twenty fathers work in six major cities in China and they have already baptized many Chinese, including a few mandarins”.⁸

Along with the report of Muzio Vitelleschi, another letter arrived from the Portuguese Assistant to the Superior General of the Jesuits, Nuno Mascarenhas. This communication included a description of obstacles to spreading the Catholic faith, which constituted, for Ingoli, an important supplement to the optimistic report. They included: “the lack of missionaries; their inexperience and ignorance of languages; the fear of sacrifices which made them hesitate to visit the ‘pagans’ in their inhospitable regions; moreover, there was the spirit of profit, as well as simony in the administration of sacraments; many missionaries only thought of returning to their homeland and therefore showed little concern for their faithful, furthermore giving them a bad example of life. On the other hand, those who truly dedicated themselves to missionary activities must live in extreme poverty; have to suffer greatly from the opposition”. Thus, the Assistant suggested several remedies, such as: “1. send missionaries who have been scientifically well trained and who have the zeal of souls, who do not think of returning to their homeland but who are willing to learn

indigenous languages and care about the formation of indigenous priests; 2. send those secular priests who will not seek personal enrichment but who will devote themselves ardently to their ministry, without posing as judges in front of their flock. Only those who seek Christ, not riches, could be chosen as bishops; 3. be responsible for the maintenance of the missionaries, protect them against the encroachments of lay officials, and grant them the privileges they need for the free fulfillment of their obligations" (APF, SOCG vol. 189, ff. 17v–18r).

As for the Dominicans, it was Miguel Rangel,⁹ Visitor and Vicar General of his order in the East Indies, who provided the first information about the state of missions in the East. He mentioned the great missionary prospects, which, however, could not be realized due to the lack of missionaries. He dealt with the obstacles encountered by the missionaries and noted "the enmity of Muslims, pagans and heretics". He then severely condemned "the slave trade", of which he showed the ravages for the Catholic mission, before concluding with a discussion of the problem of a lack of financial resources. As remedies for these deficiencies, he recommended sending numerous well-chosen missionaries to guarantee their maintenance and the freedom of neophytes (APF, SOCG vol. 189, ff. 47r–52r). A few years later, in 1629, another Dominican, Luis de Andrade, wrote a detailed report on the general situation of the missions in East Africa and Asia. He, too, allowed himself to once again make suggestions to Propaganda Fide on how to revive missionary activities. He said, for example, that if a bishop was nominated in Ceylon, the entire island would become Catholic in a few years (APF, SOCG vol. 189, ff. 609r–626r).

In 1623, the first report from the Franciscans also reached Rome. It was most likely written by the Procurator of the Order and was based, as explicitly stated, on the written reports of the provincials of the province of the Philippines and on the verbal declarations of Luca di San Gabriello, who arrived in Rome in 1623, coming from the East. This report described the missions of the Franciscans in the Philippines, Japan, and the Moluccas. The author dwelled at length on the conditions in Japan, where persecution had just broken out (APF, SOCG vol. 189, ff. 298r–303r).

All of the above-mentioned reports were generally optimistic. They narrated great successes and predicted even greater ones. However, among the Apostolic Nuncios, there was a report from the Collector in Lisbon, Antonio Albergati,¹⁰ dated 4 March 1623, which had a completely different tone. It dealt with the situation of the missions in Asia, Africa, and Brazil—in short, territories falling under Portuguese Patronage. Albergati complained that almost no progress had been made since in countries where innumerable conversions had occurred in the early years. He considered this lack of expansion tantamount to regressing, and the main cause was the Portuguese, who, he stated, "have no fear of God and treat the natives cruelly, not caring about their conversion at all...the members of Portuguese religious congregations who go on missions are much more concerned with amassing wealth for their families than preaching the gospel". Therefore, Albergati argued, the Catholic Church should "recall bad missionaries, and send only exemplary ones in the future. Furthermore, it must be considered as a disadvantage and a restriction on the freedom of the mission the fact that the Portuguese government, for national and political reasons, only allows Portuguese citizens to depart as missionaries for the colonies of their country". For his part, Albergati admitted that he had already protested energetically against it and had recently successfully sent eight Italian missionaries to the Indies (APF, CP vol. 1, ff. 414r–417v).

After listing the major difficulties that hindered missionary work, Albergati gave some advice to the Congregation. He believed that there should be a superior among the missionaries in order to avoid disputes because that was the reason why "God no longer blesses the missionary activities. Missionaries should be strictly prohibited from doing business. Only zealous missionaries could be sent on missions. It would be better not to appoint any members of religious congregations as bishops, because it is impossible for them to be impartial towards members of other Orders. Missionaries should be sent in greater numbers, especially to the Indies; to do this, some of them might have to travel

on land, because only a limited number of missionaries were admitted on the Portuguese ships". Concerning the mission in East Asia, he suggested founding "new missions in China where prospects are favorable; furnish help in Japan where persecution reigns; reinforcement in the Philippines where there is a great shortage of priests" (APF, CP vol. 1, ff. 414r–417v).

The missionary information came from all over the world and convinced the members of Propaganda Fide that the Congregation had been founded at the right moment. Secretary Ingoli studied these materials carefully and brought together the serious difficulties encountered by the Catholic Church worldwide in three Memoirs and presented them to the Congregation, adding his own suggestions as to how to eliminate these problems. The Memoirs deal exclusively with missions among the "pagans", constituting additional proof of the interest that the Congregation had in its early days. Ingoli indicated in his writings the direction that Propaganda Fide must take if the church intended to achieve what was expected (Metzler 1971, p. 160). In the first Memoir, dated 1625, Ingoli started his writings with these words: "Presentation of the difficulties encountered in the Indies by the propagation of our Holy Religion and on the remedies that should be adopted in order to eliminate them". According to him, the Catholic mission faced two major obstacles: the disagreement between bishops and missionaries and the fact that many missionaries were passionately concerned with acquiring wealth and sending it to Europe. These were the two main "evils" that had caused other scandals. The result was a generalized inefficiency in all missionary work, for not only did the church no longer obtain conversions, but it was even losing the Christian communities that had already been established (APF, SOCG vol. 189, ff. 390r–392r).

After receiving more reports and letters, Ingoli made himself aware of further aspects of missionary work. Three years later, in 1628, he presented another Memoir on the same subject to the Cardinals of the Congregation, in which he listed further disorders: "the bishops and priests did not know indigenous languages, the dioceses were so large that the missionaries were not able to visit or educate local people, European missionaries neither admit natives to join their Orders nor accept them to be ordained as priests because the Indians easily got drunk". Ingoli attributed this phenomenon to the Europeans themselves, who kept "a large number of wine taverns, and sold it to the Indians at a great profit, making them unspeakably rich" (APF, SOCG vol. 189, ff. 175r–176v). Directly criticizing the European missionaries who were against the priestly ordination of the indigenous people, Ingoli argued that without indigenous priests, "the Church of the Indies will always be a child, and will never grow up, and since Europe cannot supply so many needs, not only does it not advance the preaching of the Holy Gospel outside the Mediterranean parts, but the part of converted literates will be lost" (APF, SOCG vol. 259, f. 25r–25v). Therefore, he presented, for the first time, the idea of indigenization to the Congregation and demanded that the indigenous people be admitted to priestly ordination.

On 24 November 1628, the Pope, who attended the general meeting of the Congregation, proposed a Special Commission (Congregatio particularis) to study the entire question of indigenization. With regard to the ordination of indigenous people, however, he laid down the guiding principle: indigenous people are "fit to be promoted to the priesthood, because through them the Catholic faith will be more easily preserved and spread" (APF, Acta vol. 6, f. 162).

3. The Indigenization Policy in China

Thus, respect for the indigenous cultures and beliefs was an essential component of the reorientation of the missionary program by Propaganda Fide, leading to the establishment of an ordinary ecclesiastical hierarchy in mission territories (Metzler 2000, p. 153). Francesco Ingoli, as Secretary, committed himself personally to prioritizing the priestly ordination of indigenous people from every nation and caste, both in the East and West. This fact demonstrated his foresight and clear vision for a central and decisive point of evangelization. For him, no people or culture did not have young people who were capable of

becoming priests. In his many writings, Ingoli sought to “dismantle the prejudices against natives’ ability” (Metzler 2000, p. 152). He firmly believed that the non-European world should only be Christianized while retaining, as much as possible, its cultural autonomy rather than being Europeanized (Kilger 1922, pp. 15–30).

Before changes came to China, progress in this area began elsewhere. The first opportunity to deal with this topic arose in 1625. On 27 June, the Congregation decided to give the Archbishop of Mexico permission to ordain mestizos from Spain and indigenous people from the Indian tribe of the Chichimeken as priests and to grant them the necessary dispensation powers (APF, Acta vol. 3, f. 236v). The Pope agreed to this almost immediately, on 2 July. However, this answer was not given lightly, and the Congregation first had to inform the Crown of Spain (Müller 1971, p. 540). Concerning the mission in the East, in September or October of the same year, Matteo de Castro,¹¹ a Brahman from Eastern India, arrived in Rome, for whom—according to what he said—the Archbishop of Goa had refused ordination. Ingoli, after questioning him, ordered that he complete his studies and be ordained a priest. Matteo himself would later, in 1637, be the first Vicar Apostolic and indigenous bishop of the Congregation (Sorge 1986).

In China, the situation of indigenous clergy presented numerous similarities to that of India (Wicki 1950, pp. 17–72). In reality, almost all ecclesiastical positions were occupied by the Jesuits until the 1630s, when members of the Mendicant order began to arrive (Hsia 2006, p. 185). The first project of training the Chinese clergy was presented to Propaganda Fide in 1643 by the Dominican Juan Bautista Morales, who envisaged the erection of a college or seminary in Taiwan, where other Dominican friars had developed a promising mission (Margiotti 1971, p. 625). The conclusion of the discussion in Rome was to send a warm exhortation to the Dominican provincial of the Holy Rosary Province in the Philippines to carry out that project (APF, SOCG vol. 406, f. 51r).

Just over ten years later, in 1655, the Jesuit Martino Martini presented another similar project and provided detailed information on the place, the means, the direction, and the rules that he intended to propose (APF, Acta vol. 24, f. 28r). As for the place for the erection of the seminary, he said that although various important cities of China could be chosen, for the moment, there was no better place than Macao. In that city, the Jesuits of the vice province of China could provide the site that would be called “The Seminary of the Name of Jesus on the Propagation of the Faith in China raised by the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide” (Seminarium Nominis Iesu de Propaganda Fide apud Sinas a S. Congregatione de Prop. Fide erectum). The Jesuits, responsible for the administration, would appoint a rector, an assistant, and a teacher and would also provide financial support for the students. Martini pointed out that someone from Naples had already donated 3000 scudi, and 50 scudi would be sufficient to support each student. Propaganda Fide only needed to establish the number of students that it intended to support. The seminary, once established, then had to be reserved exclusively for the Chinese, and the Jesuits would send an annual report to Propaganda Fide about the number of students, their progress, and other relevant information (APF, SOCG vol. 193, ff. 457r–457v). The Jesuit Adam Pleickner, the official executor of the pending documents in Rome, was charged with following this case and sent a memorial to Pope Alexander VII to solicit Martini’s plea for the erection of a seminary in China (APF, SOCG vol. 193, f. 261r). However, it does not appear that the project went any further (Longo 2010, p. 117).

On the part of the Jesuits, although the Superior Generals in Rome had repeatedly issued directives for the Provincial fathers to accept the indigenous people into the Society, there was adamant opposition. The Provincial fathers spoke out against the acceptance of the indigenous people and effectively blocked the directive from Rome. These Provincials included fathers like Francisco Cabral, Provincial in Goa, and Alessandro Valigano, Visitor in Japan and China, who was only in favor of accepting Japanese into the clergy. Even those Portuguese born in India were not accepted, except under the strictest conditions (Hsia 2006, p. 190). However, after the persecution unleashed by Yang Guangxian, the Belgian Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688), as Vice-Provincial of the Mission in China,

advocated for the admission of Chinese scholars in a long memorandum addressed to the Jesuit Visitor Sebastião de Almeida, in which Verbiest analyzed the current conditions and future prospects of the mission in China (see *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, hereafter abbreviated as ARSI, *Japonica et Sinica* 199, n. 16). Moreover, the Jesuit Alexandre de Rhodes, after having been expelled from his previous mission in Vietnam, where he had witnessed with his own eyes the beheading of his catechist Andrew, proceeded immediately upon his arrival in Rome in 1649 to ask for the establishment of bishops in East Asia in order to promote the development of an indigenous clergy capable of guaranteeing the survival of Christian communities (Etcharren 2008, pp. 15–16).

In 1659, Monsignor Francesco Ingoli prepared an Instruction sent to the first Vicars Apostolic¹² in China and Indochina, which soon became the “Magna Carta” of Propaganda Fide. For a long time, this document served as the “Manual” for all missionaries, in which the indigenous policy was clearly expressed (Metzler 1971, p. 165). In fact, the main instruction which the Congregation sent to the Vicars Apostolic was that they should do their “utmost in every way to train young people so that they become suitable for the priesthood”. The Congregation intended to develop local diocesan priests, thereby effectively avoiding the monopoly of religious orders on the mission field (Mangiotti 1971, p. 627). It was also said that if the Vicars Apostolic found priests suitable for the episcopate, they could consecrate them directly once they had secured the permission of the Congregation (Metzler 2000, p. 151). Propaganda Fide urged all missionaries not to “make any attempt or seek in any way to persuade those peoples to change their customs, their way of life, their habits, unless they are openly contrary to the Catholic faith and morality”, because “there is nothing more absurd than wanting to bring France or Spain or Italy or another part of Europe to China. None of this, but the faith you must bring, faith that does not reject or offend the way of life and customs of any people...these things should be preserved and protected”.¹³

From the second half of the seventeenth century, the Catholic Church in China was transformed gradually from a mission territory into an ecclesiastical territory with episcopal jurisdictions (Hsia 2006, p. 185). Secretary Urbano Cerri (1675–1679), who brought about a revival of Ingoli’s policies, exposed, with a number of examples, how the foundation of an ancient diocese, even though it was later abandoned, left an indelible mark on evangelization, a matrix for the subsequent recovery of the episcopal mission (APF, CP vol. 21, ff. 215r–242v). The Bishop of Nanjing, Gregorio Lopez, Luo Wenzao 羅文藻 (c. 1615–1691) became the first Chinese Dominican and bishop, being converted and trained in Manila (Biermann 1953, pp. 275–83). Born around 1615 in the village of Luojiexiang, in the district of Fuan, Funing Prefecture, Fujian province, from a local non-Christian lineage, he was baptized by the Franciscan Antonio de Santa Maria Caballero in 1634; he was employed by the missionary as one of his young assistants (González 1966). In 1645, he began his Latin and humanistic training in Manila, first in the Franciscan convent and then at the Santo Tomas College. His inclination was towards the Franciscan order, but since they refused to accept him, he turned to the Dominicans (Müller 1971, p. 549). On 1 January 1650, due to his service and virtue, Luo was conferred the so-called “choir habit”, the sign of formal admission to the order. On 7 March 1651, he was admitted to the solemn profession. On 30 June 1654, he received the diaconate ordination, and on 7 July 1654, the priestly ordination. Luo returned to China in July 1655 together with his confreres Vittorio Riccio, Domingo Coronado, Diego Rodriguez, and Raymundo del Valle (González 1966). It is noteworthy that Vittorio Riccio gave the following testimony about Luo: “After receiving the garment, his conduct and virtue were exemplary, reflecting the lives of other religious people and servants of God in this kingdom. But when he was ordained a priest, it was incredible what benefit he brought through his ministry because, as a native of this land, he understood much more deeply than the Europeans the depth of conscience, such as the rites, behavior and customs” (Biermann 1938, p. 110).

During the 1650s and early 1660s, Luo engaged in pastoral work in Fujian, where he rendered many services to foreign missionaries, particularly during the anti-Christian

campaign of the so-called Calendar Case (*liyu* 曆獄, 1665–1670).¹⁴ Being Chinese, he could go unnoticed by the authorities. Over the years, he traveled far and wide, visiting communities in different provinces, such as Zhili, Shandong, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, Sichuan, Hunan, and Guangdong (González 1966). The fame of Luo soon reached the French Vicars Apostolic of China, Tonkin, and Cocinchina, who petitioned Propaganda Fide to name Luo as Vicar Apostolic and to consecrate him as bishop. This petition received a positive answer in Rome. On 4 January 1674, with the papal brief *Super Cathedram*, Pope Clement X named him bishop of Basiliopolis, Vicar Apostolic of Nanjing, and Apostolic Administrator of five other northern Chinese provinces and Korea.¹⁵ However, this news did not reach him until two years later, and it was only on 8 April 1685 that he managed to find the Italian Franciscan bishop, Bernardino Della Chiesa (1644–1721),¹⁶ who would consecrate him (APF, SC Indie Orientali e Cina vol. 4, ff. 183r–184r). The consecration was rather eventful, however, because Charles Maigrot,¹⁷ who had previously received the charge of “General Administrator of all the Chinese Mission and Pro-Vicar of the Southern Chinese Provinces,” from the French Vicar Apostolic, opposed the jurisdictional limits of Bernardino Della Chiesa and accused Luo of being less theologically trained. Only when assisted by the Italian Franciscan Francesco Nicolai da Leonessa was Luo able to continue his journey to Nanjing, arriving on 30 June 1685, where he was finally received with great jubilation by local Christians.

From the beginning of his time as bishop, one of Luo’s great concerns was the ordination of Chinese people to the priesthood. In his 2 October 1685 letter addressed to Propaganda Fide, he explained the great need for indigenous priests in China. In the provinces under his pastoral care, there were only 15 missionaries, and most of them were old. The primary difficulty for the ordination of Chinese people was the Latin language. Luo was firmly convinced that if the Chinese were to completely dispense with Latin and were allowed to use Chinese in Mass and the Office, a whole series of ordinations would swiftly follow. He asked Propaganda Fide for the necessary permission. In the same letter, Luo announced that he would shortly ordain several Chinese people who were already members of the Society of Jesus (Müller 1971, p. 550). In fact, on 1 August 1688, he actually ordained three Chinese Jesuits: Wu Li (吳曆, 1632–1718), baptized under the name of Simon Xavier in 1681, who had joined the Company in 1682; Wan Qiyuan (萬其淵, 1631 or 1635–1700)¹⁸, baptized as Paul Banhes, who became a Jesuit in 1676; and Liu Wende (劉蘊德, 1628–1707), deputy director of the Department of Astronomy, who converted in 1684 under the name of Blaise Verbiest and joined the Company in the same year. All three were over 50 years old at their ordination (Hsia 2006, p. 193). The bishop urged them to be humble and modest: “Who are you to receive the honor of the priesthood, and who am I to become a bishop? Because we are Chinese and Christians in our land, we were given the favor of becoming priests and servants of the Lord. If we were in Europe, neither the Society of Jesus nor the Order of St. Dominic would hardly consider us worthy of the office” (Bürkler 1950, p. 123; Fang 2007, p. 383).

The ordination documents of these first three Chinese priests expressly stated that they did not understand Latin but could read it for Mass. Luo repeatedly appealed to Rome to stop the Chinese from needing to use Latin. He saw this as a necessary prerequisite for the indigenization of the Chinese clergy, and he was not alone in his opinion (APF, SC Indie Orientali e Cina vol. 5, ff. 141r–144v). However, Propaganda Fide, believing that Luo had ordained priests ignorant of Latin, decided that they should remain suspended. All this was preceded by the decision: “Such instances of imposition shall not be accepted” (*Similes instantiae imposerum non recipiantur*). This was valid for Luo and for Della Chiesa, who asked for permission to ordain 12 priests in the same way (APF, Acta CP vol. 1B, ff. 254r–254v). The last letter from Luo to Propaganda Fide, dated 28 August 1690, referred in detail to the pastoral situation of his vicariate (APF, SC Indie Orientali e Cina vol. 5, ff. 634r–638v). In Nanjing, there were 16 priests, 13 of whom belonged to the Society of Jesus and 3 to the Franciscan order. Among them, four were French, three were Portuguese, three were Spanish, two were Flemish, three were Italian, and one was

Chinese. There were no priests in Shanxi, Shaanxi, or Henan at that time. His priests were full of great virtue and zeal and willingly obeyed his orders. Unfortunately, the number of priests could hardly meet the spiritual needs of Christians. This was a constant source of suffering for Luo. He regretted that Propaganda Fide had refused the dispensation from Latin and renewed his request. He reported on the spiritual depression of Wan Qiyuan, who lived in the mountains of Huguang and whom he wanted to “meet with great love”. Since all missionaries were suffering greatly from the decision of Rome, he asked the Congregation to do everything possible to ensure that the missionaries in China were allowed to stay with the indigenous people and that, in the future, the number of missionaries would be multiplied. Furthermore, he regretted that he had not been able to ordain more Chinese people up to that point: “up until now I still believe that the Chinese people cannot do much for the mission, because they are not religious”. The Chinese Christians “would have to be allowed to work independently, which is what they actually want and demand” (APF, SC Indie Orientali e Cina vol. 5, ff. 635v–637r).

At about the same time, another request from the procurator of the Society of Jesus, Philipp Couplet S.J., arrived in Rome. He had been trying to find a solution for 10 years and asked to be allowed to say Mass in Chinese. However, no decision was made by Propaganda Fide (APF, Acta vol. 55, ff. 214v–215v). As early as 1615, Nicolas Trigault S.J. received a papal brief from Paul V, through which the previous Latin education was abandoned, and a purely Chinese liturgy was permitted (Seah 2017). Unfortunately, the brief faced strong opposition from the Jesuits of the Japanese Province. In 1667, François de Rougement S.J., in a petition to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, pointed out the need for a Chinese liturgy because of the difficulty in using Latin. Prosper Intorcetta S.J. was sent to Rome as the elected procurator. He presented a petition on this issue, first in 1670, when he represented these concerns to Propaganda Fide, and then again on 8 August 1680, in another letter directly to the Superior General reporting that “no Chinese was admitted to the Society this year, as the Visitor forbade it” (ARSI, Japonica et Sinica 199, n. 20). The opposition came not only from among the Jesuits but also from other theologians. Christian Lupus, Regius Professor of Theology at the University of Leuven and one of the fiercest opponents to a Chinese liturgy, stated that “if we allow the Chinese to celebrate in their language, a schism will be inevitable. And even if they do not fall into formal schism, communion with Rome will be impossible by default because of their lack of knowledge of Latin. The Chinese bishops will not be able to gather with us in a synod; their priests will not be able to celebrate Mass with us and ours will not be able to visit them; the Roman Church will not be able to send legates to China” (Bontinck 1962, p. 82; Seah 2017, p. 101).

Recruiting young men and preparing them for the priesthood by teaching them Latin, as required by Propaganda Fide, was truly not an easy thing (Müller 1971, p. 555). However, the Congregation never stopped trying. In September 1701, Propaganda Fide prepared 1000 scudi for the proposal made by the Lazarist Ludovico Antonio Appiani (1663–1726) to build a seminary in China (APF, Acta CP, vol. 2, f. 105). While this project failed due to the imprisonment of Appiani, two priests from the Paris Foreign Missions Society began a seminary in the province of Sichuan. However, forced to flee, nine of those young men were welcomed by Cardinal Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon, the papal Legate to China (1702–1710), in his house in Macao where, on 21 December 1709, he gave the first tonsure to two of them, Andrea Li 李安德 and Antonio Tang 黨懷仁 (APF, SC vol. 9, ff. 383v–385v). Created Patriarch of Antioch, accredited as Apostolic Visitor to the East Indies and China, invested with the comprehensive powers of a *Legatus a latere* (a legate sent “from the pope’s side”), Pope Clemente XI had placed the highest stakes on the success of Maillard de Tournon’s legation (Rouleau 1962, pp. 264–323). In fact, his mission, whereby the Pope sent personnel to the East directly through the papal Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, bypassing the patronage system, was a first (Zhang 2022b). Scholars have long debated his true aim in China, but from a document of the Vatican Apostolic Archive, it can clearly be seen that the core of his mission was pastoral care, which meant to “erect churches, establish dioceses, ordain bishops and take care of the nascent Christianity” (Vat-

ican Apostolic Archive, Sec. Brev., Reg. 2509, ff. 34–38v; Zhang 2022a, p. 10). Unhappily, due to language barriers, cultural differences, and the obstruction of the Portuguese, his journey ended in a tragedy, and he died in 1710 at the age of just 41 (Zhang 2022a, p. 200).

In 1715, Pope Clement XI issued the decree *Ex Illa Die* on the Chinese Rites Controversy, which officially condemned the Chinese rites and became a fixed point for all missionaries in their dealings with the emperor. Disagreeing with the Pope's decision, the Kangxi Emperor banned all Christian missions in China in 1721 (Spence 1994, pp. 15–16). During the period of prohibition, a longer-lasting seminary was founded in Sichuan by the Lazarist Johannes Müllener (1673–1742). On 2 September 1715, Müllener was appointed as Titular Bishop of Myriopyhte, and on 4 September, as Vicar Apostolic of Sichuan. He was consecrated as a bishop by Bernardino Della Chiesa on 13 December 1716 (Von Collani 2009, pp. 95–130). For several years, Müllener worked alone and secretly as a missionary in Sichuan, where he tried to educate and establish an indigenous clergy (Crapez 1938, pp. 14–59). The seminary was subsidized by Propaganda Fide with 100 scudi in 1720. The same year, that seminary had a martyr: Baldassare Yang (Mezzadri 2013). Concerned by this fact, Müllener moved six seminarians to Guangzhou in 1725. But following the Propaganda Fide procurator's observations, the Congregation ordered Müllener to take some of them with him. Promptly returning to Sichuan, he created a new seminary capable of educating ten young people, which fell into disrepair upon his death (APF, Acta CP vol. 3, f. 117).

Around the same period, the Jesuit Julien-Placide Hervieu revived the project of ordaining elderly catechists, ignorant of Latin, to the priesthood. In presenting the proposal to the members of Propaganda Fide on 23 September 1725, Secretary Monsignor Bartolomeo Ruspoli (1675–1758) suggested choosing one or two missionaries in each province to train young Chinese for the priesthood. Although realizing the seriousness of the problem, the members present at the discussion limited themselves to prescribing the secretary's suggestion and requesting the opinion of the former missionaries resident in Rome (APF, Acta CP vol. 4, ff. 87r–88v). Bishops Charles Maigrot, Gianfrancesco Nicolai, Jean-François Foucquet, and Abbot Giuseppe Ignazio Cordero were interrogated. The only point of convergence among them was the need to train Chinese priests (APF, Acta CP vol. 4, ff. 99r–100v). Propaganda Fide then submitted this issue to the Holy Office, and the reply, on 7 February 1727, was to continue to celebrate in Latin even without any understanding. All that remained was to order the individual Latin training proposed by the Secretary (APF, SOCP vol. 33, f. 70).

Although the members of the Roman Congregation wanted to adapt to local cultures and traditions, they still insisted that the Chinese, like non-European priests in general, should at least read Latin, if not understand it. Requiring only reading knowledge was a privilege first granted to the French Vicars Apostolic in China in 1659 and subsequently to all bishops until the 19th century (Müller 1971, p. 555). Using this privilege, the French Jesuits ordained three mature catechists in 1730, but various difficulties led them to suspend the experiment (APF, Acta CP vol. 6, ff. 328r–328v). The attempts at individual training in Latin were also largely unsuccessful. In the vicariate of Shanxi, in spite of the efforts of the Vicars Apostolic, Monsignor Francesco Saraceni, Francesco Garretto, Eugenio Piloti, and other missionaries, in the end, only one—Thomas Wang—was admitted to the priesthood in September 1745 (APF, Acta CP vol. 6, f. 333).

Due to the difficult situation in China under the reign of the Yongzheng (1722–1735) and the Qianlong (1735–1796) Emperors, Propaganda Fide began to change its indigenization policy of training Chinese clergy inside China and sought ways to train them in seminaries outside of China. The first idea came from Propaganda Fide in 1719 (Margiotti 1973, p. 1010), but the first realization fell to Matteo Ripa (1682–1746), who was sent as a missionary to China by Propaganda Fide to bring the Cardinal's hat to Maillard de Tournon (Zhang 2022a, p. 190). Between 1711 and 1723, he served as a painter and copper engraver at the court of the Kangxi Emperor (Ripa 1991, 2013). On 20 November 1724, he landed in Naples with four Chinese students, who formed the basis of the Chinese College, which Pope

Clement XII sanctioned to help in the propagation of Christianity in China, and managed to train many indigenous priests over several centuries.¹⁹ Ripa's example found various imitators and consequently opened a new window for Propaganda Fide's indigenization policy.²⁰

4. Conclusions

The Congregation de Propaganda Fide, founded in 1622, was the embodiment of a sustained effort to reassert the papacy's universal spiritual primacy. As the missionary activities of the papacy increased globally from the seventeenth century onwards, the Congregation took on responsibilities for more and more areas of activity (Pizzorusso 2019, p. 419). The complexity of Propaganda Fide's space of action and the difficulty of pursuing any uniform jurisdiction were obvious. This missionary space was external to Catholicism and was not subject to the ordinary institutions of the Church and even ordinary Canon Law. The manifold objectives of Propaganda Fide were as follows: to transform missions from a colonial phenomenon to a purely ecclesiastical and spiritual one; to free the missionaries from any political interference; to encourage the training of indigenous clergy and urge the creation of national episcopal hierarchies; to respect the culture and customs of the various peoples, converting them to the Catholic faith with the pastoral method alone, without either any compulsion or imposing European civilization or culture upon them; and finally, to establish a unified program in missionary work around the globe (Metzler 1974, p. 7).

The first reports that the newly founded Congregation received from the missions primarily criticized the egoism and materialism of the foreign missionaries. A deep distrust of the indigenous people by the foreign missionaries who were in place in the mission territories played a major role in all of the concerns which expressed opposition to the indigenization policy of Propaganda Fide in the seventeenth century. The first Secretary of the Congregation, Monsignor Francesco Ingoli, justified his statement by saying that the indigenous people were no less human than the Europeans and that Asians and Africans should not be excluded from the priesthood; in addition, many indigenous people were even superior to the Europeans in terms of talent, skills, and moral behavior. While Ingoli emphasized the personal dignity of the indigenous people, the Pope, in the same context, pointed out that it was easier for the indigenous priests to preserve and spread the faith among their own people (APF, Acta vol. 6, f. 162). The Particular Congregation of 28 October 1630 stated that the reason for an indigenous clergy was in the ancient tradition of the church, coming from the Holy Scriptures and the practice of the apostles and the early Church (APF, Miscellanea Varie vol. 21, ff. 5r-5v).

Regarding the indigenization policy of clergy in China, the text of the Instructions from 1659, which was repeated in many later documents, spoke of an easier (*facilius*) and firmer (*firmitus*) rooting of the Catholic faith in the mission territory. Since the beginning, Propaganda Fide focused greatly on the Vicars Apostolic, who had the title of bishop in partibus and were directly answerable to the Pope. These bishops, even with the adjustments and exceptions for special faculties, shared common obligations with the ordinary episcopacy according to the precepts of Trent (Pizzorusso 2017, p. 440). The main advantage of the presence of bishops was to be able to ordain indigenous priests directly in mission territories. According to Propaganda Fide, an indigenous secular clergy was much more effective in the conversion of local people than European missionaries (Pizzorusso 2017, p. 435). Luo Wenzao, the first Chinese bishop, complained about the shortage of priests and saw the generous ordination of Chinese people as the only remedy. However, Luo's appointment as bishop was an isolated case under special circumstances. At that time, the Chinese church did not have enough local clergy to take over the bishop's office, nor was there a seminary for the training of young priests. The first Chinese priests ordained by Luo were all Jesuits of advanced age. In addition, their theological and philosophical literacy was insufficient, and their Latin proficiency was not good enough to maintain regular correspondence with Rome (Chen 2016). Even Luo Wenzao himself, after his consecration, was criticized by many people who believed that he did not fully meet the

qualifications and qualities of a bishop. The fact that Luo took 11 years and 3 months from his election to his ordination shows clearly that the difficulties for a Chinese bishop came not only from his abilities but were also influenced by other factors, such as the conflicts between the Jesuits and Mendicants, regulars and seculars, and Europeans and Chinese (Liu and Shang 2020, pp. 212–19).

The requirement of Propaganda Fide that the Chinese priests had to learn Latin demonstrates its limitations. According to the logic of the Roman Curia at that time, if the church were to give permission to China, then other countries in Africa, the Americas, and Asia would also want it. Given Rome's limited resources and linguistic expertise, creating and managing translations in multiple languages was simply impossible. Furthermore, if a country using another language were to fall into some form of heresy, the papacy would not be able to identify it quickly enough or intervene appropriately (Bontinck 1962, pp. 86–88; Seah 2017, p. 101). Thus, uniformity in language was still deemed necessary for unity in faith. Confronted with these diversified realities, Propaganda Fide responded with models of the Tridentine church, but this stiffening legal framework required adaptations, limitations, and a "pluralization" of jurisdictional levels. The application of the canons could well have been achieved, but the local practices of the faithful who had converted, often neophytes, and the clergy itself did not correspond to the dictates of Rome. In the jurisdictional effort, the role of other Roman congregations, such as the Holy Office and the Congregation of Council, deserves special attention (Pizzorusso 2017, p. 441).

Nevertheless, after the first century of Catholicism in China, the formation of an indigenous clergy finally had a beginning, albeit timid. The case study of the Papal Legate, Maillard de Tournon, and other Vicars Apostolic during the eighteenth century shows that Propaganda Fide never gave up its attempts to further the indigenization policy. In fact, the Chinese priest Andrea Li, ordained by Maillard de Tournon, confirmed once again in his diary that the papal Legate "opened the door for the Chinese indigenous clergy" (Xie 2018, pp. 66–72). However, it was not easy to establish a long-lasting structure to train indigenous young men in China. Greater financial resources were required, and political difficulties needed to be overcome. The appointment of bishops was also disputed by the powers of patronage and by those who provided protection over missions, such as Portugal. The decision to train Chinese people abroad might not have been the best choice, but it turned out to be a good solution. The "Chinese College" in Naples became fruitful, and not only benefited Catholic missions but other places such as the British Embassy to China, headed by George Macartney (1737–1806), who was assisted by Li Zibiao (1760–1826), one of the early graduates (Harrison 2021; Wang 2023).

These efforts were intensified when the Congregation's interest in indigenous cultures and clergy was further heightened by another Secretary of the Congregation, Stefano Borgia (1770–1789),²¹ who emphasized that the indigenous clergy included "not only native priests but also native bishops" (Metzler 2000, p. 152). Under his tenure, the positive attitude towards local cultures reached its peak. He intensified the Congregation's interest in the cultures of peoples even more clearly and reorganized the work of the Congregation, taking care to encourage, even at his own expense, the training of indigenous clergy in the mission territories (Enzensberger 1971). He took advantage of his relationships practically, through the missionaries, and requested that everyone collect and send him back objects of indigenous art, which would help Propaganda Fide to understand the different cultures more clearly and contribute to scientific research, as was expressly noted in a specific Instruction (APF, Circ. Vol. II, n. LXXI).

As the new Secretary, Borgia confirmed that the difficulties and limited success of the mission in China, and in Asia in general, were due to the lack of the appointment of indigenous bishops (Metzler 2000, p. 153). He presented to the members of the Particular Congregation a detailed *Memorial on the Need to Establish National Bishops* (D'Arelli 2008, pp. 283–312) and stated that all difficulties "should be resolved in one fell swoop, that is, by coming to the grandiose resolution of finally giving the Chinese indigenous bishops... Without all this, Europeans in China will be Shepherds in name, linked to the Flock, but

not loved by the Flock” (APF, SC Missioni Miscellanea vol. 2, f. 359r–379v). Indeed, after the Apostolic Constitution *Ex quo singulari*, published by Pope Benedict XIV in 1742, led to the expulsion of major foreign missionaries in China, an indigenous Chinese clergy would eventually carry the burden of the church during the dark years of persecution between 1784 and 1842 when anti-Christian legislation was repealed.

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Notes

- ¹ *Ad gentes* (To the Nations) is the title of the Second Vatican Council’s decree on missionary activity. It both reaffirmed the need for missions and salvation through Christ. This decree defines evangelization as one of the fundamental missions of the Catholic Church and underlines that the young churches should gradually acquire a diocesan structure with their own clergy, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html (accessed on 18 October 2023).
- ² The Jesuit missions to China are well known and there are also numerous studies on the Mendicant Orders in China. See (Camps and McCloskey 1995; Clark 2017).
- ³ This work mainly uses two sources from the Propaganda Fide Historical Archive: Scrittura Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali (SOCC, original documents referred to in the general meetings) and Congregazioni Particolari (CP, special meetings). The first source is made up of a collection of documents used to provide a background for discussion in the general meetings: letters and pro Memoria from bishops, missionaries and princes, dispatches from Nuncios and Delegates, the Acta of synods, apostolic visitations, and the opinions of consultors. The second source contains documents that were discussed in the special meetings. If difficulties arose concerning any given questions, the Congregation entrusted them to a commission of Cardinals whose members were normally chosen by the Pope. It was therefore an ad hoc commission, such as Special Commission on the Indies and China (Congregatio Particularis de rebus Sinarum et Indiarum Orientalium). For more information about the Inventory of Propaganda Fide Historical Archive, see (Metzler 1988).
- ⁴ The letters addressed to the Apostolic Nuncios and General Superiors were dated 1622, see Propaganda Fide Historical Archives in the Vatican City, hereafter abbreviated as APF, Lettere vol. 2, f. 2r–4v, 5r–5v.
- ⁵ The new Congregation was initially made up of thirteen Cardinals: Antonio Maria Sauli, Odoardo Farnese, Ottavio Bandini, François d’Escoubleau de Sourdis, Maffeo Barberini (future Pope Urban VIII), Giovanni Garzia Millini, Gaspar Borja, Roberto Ubaldini, Eitel Friedrichcount von Hohenzoller, Scipione Cobelluzio, Pietro Valiero, Francesco Sacrati and Ludovico Ludovisi, nephew of Pope Gregory XV. See (Zhang 2022a, p. 26). For further information about the representative of Portugal, card. Giovanni Garzia Millini, see (Giordano 2008).
- ⁶ See Archivio Storico della Congregazione de Propaganda Fide (APF), Congregazioni Particolari (CP) vol. 1, ff. 293r–298r.
- ⁷ Other details of Vittorio Accorese can be found in APF, CP vol. 1, ff. 355r–355v; APF, CP vol. 2, ff. 193r–196r; APF, SOCC vol. 382, ff. 61r, 66v, 210r.
- ⁸ See APF, Scrittura Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali (SOCC) vol. 189, ff. 17r–17v.
- ⁹ For more information on Miguel Rangel, see (Nunes 1993, pp. 149–216).
- ¹⁰ Antonio Albergati (1566–1634) was born in Bologna, Italy, and served as Catholic Bishop of Bisceglie (1609–1627), Apostolic Nuncio to Germany (1610–1621), and Apostolic Collector to Portugal (1621–1624). Charged with collecting data on the missionary situation in the Portuguese colonies, he obtained various reports (see the originals in Portuguese in the Biblioteca dell’Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana in Rome, codex 495.39.B.4), which provide scant but interesting information on the missions in the Congo, Angola, and the East Indies, Cape Verde Islands, etc. See (Rosa 1960).
- ¹¹ Matteo de Castro (1594–1677), son of Christians, studied in Rome, where he was ordained a priest in 1629 or 1630. Returning to India, he carried out missionary work. Forced to leave in 1636, he was consecrated bishop the following year in Rome and sent as Vicar Apostolic to the Muslim state of Idalcan near Goa, where, however, he had to leave in 1643; the same experience was repeated again later, meaning that in 1658, Matteo de Castro settled definitively in Rome. See (Sorge 1986).

- ¹² These Vicars Apostolic were to be consecrated bishops under the title of in partibus infidelium, a term meaning “in the lands of the unbelievers”, words conferred on non-residential or titular Latin bishops. See <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08025a.htm> (accessed on 27 September 2023).
- ¹³ The original text is in latin. See (Metzler 1976, p. 696).
- ¹⁴ The Jesuit missionary Johann Adam Schall von Bell 湯若望 (1592–1666) led the Astronomical Bureau (Qintianjian 欽天監) from 1644, after Beijing fell to the Qing dynasty. In 1664, Schall von Bell was accused by Yang Guangxian 楊光先 (1597–1669) of planning a rebellion. Schall von Bell and other Jesuits were imprisoned and condemned to death. However, following an earthquake, the Jesuits were given pardons and then exiled to Macao, with only five Chinese Christians working in the astronomical office actually being executed. Four years later, the Kangxi emperor reversed the decisions and appointed another Jesuit, Ferdinand Verbiest 南懷仁 (1623–1688), as his official astronomer, and for more than a century, the position continued to be held by missionaries. See (Chu 1997; Jami 2015).
- ¹⁵ These five Chinese provinces are Beijing, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Shandong, Henan. See (Müller 1971, p. 549).
- ¹⁶ Bernardino Della Chiesa was an Italian Franciscan friar who became Vicar Apostolic and bishop in China. He was sent by Propaganda Fide to China to enforce the subjection of all missionaries to the Vicars Apostolic and to terminate the Portuguese patronage. In 1690, Propaganda Fide established the diocese of Beijing and nominated Bernardino Della Chiesa as bishop of the new diocese. See (Van den Wyngaert 1954).
- ¹⁷ Charles Maigrot was born in Paris in 1652. He completed his doctorate in Theology at the Sorbonne in 1678. In 1680, he entered the seminary of the Missions Étrangères de Paris (MEP). Two years later, he was sent by Propaganda Fide to China and later became Vicar Apostolic of Fujian. In 1693, Maigrot reopened the Chinese Rites Controversy by condemning the rites honoring Confucius and ancestors as superstitious, and prohibited the practices in his vicariate. Ultimately, he was expelled by the Kangxi emperor. See (Von Collani 1994).
- ¹⁸ For Wan Qiyuan’s different birth years, see (Dehergne 1973, p. 23; Fang 2007, p. 382).
- ¹⁹ The four Chinese seminarians were Giovanni Gu, Giovanni Yin, Philipo Huang and Lucio Wu. All of them were ordained to the priesthood, but only three made it back to China. Lucio Wu was punished by Matteo Ripa several times severely for insubordination, and in June 1744, Ripa asked Propaganda Fide not to send this young man to China because of his “immaturity”. See (Fatica 2006; Fatica 2021; Mungello 2021).
- ²⁰ Examples include Peter Sanz, Vicar Apostolic of Fujian, who in 1735 urged the Dominican province of Manila to begin training young Chinese Dominicans. On 7 November 1738, King Charles III of Spain established 16 scholarships for Chinese, Japanese and Tonkinese people to study at the Santo Tomas College and San Juan Letrán College in Manila, where 10 Chinese and 7 Tonkin priests were trained during the 18th century. However, earlier similar initiatives carried out by the Spanish Franciscans and Portuguese Jesuits in 1733 were unsuccessful. The French Jesuits were more successful, bringing several Chinese people to France between 1740 and 1766, six of whom were ordained to the priesthood. Another seminary for the training of indigenous Chinese priests was planned in Manila by the procurators of Propaganda Fide, firstly in 1762 by Gennaro Fatigati and again later in 1783 and 1787, by Francesco Giuseppe Della Torre and Giambattista Marchini, but it was never realized. See (Margiotti 1973, p. 1010).
- ²¹ Borgia was an eminent historiographer, archaeologist and collector of manuscripts and antiquities. He had inherited these qualities from his parents, who had an archaeological museum outside Rome in Velletri, the so-called Borgia Museum. As Secretary of Propaganda Fide, Borgia began to collect antiquities of every kind and of every people: works of art, especially religious art such as images and statuettes of pagan idols, manuscripts, books, coins, etc. In short, he collected all historical and archaeological evidence of history, religion, culture, ceremonies and languages. See (Bonavita 2014).

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